DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 339 106 EA 023 478

AUTHOR Prasch, John
TITLE The New School for Educational Leadership.
PUB DATE 15 Oct 91
NOTE 9p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the University Council for Educational Administration (Baltimore, MD, October 1991).
PUB TYPE Viewpoints (Opinion/Position Papers, Essays, etc.) (120) -- Reports - Descriptive (141) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Administrator Education; *Administrator Role; Educational Administration; Elementary Secondary Education; Higher Education; *Leadership; *Leadership Qualities; *Leadership Responsibility; Occupational Information; *Principals

ABSTRACT

Traditional ways of preparing educational administrators are under scrutiny. Given the critical importance of leadership to accomplish reforms in education coupled with the emergence of new definitions of leadership, increasing the competence of educational administrators is the highest priority. Six elements for changing preparation programs for school administrators are outlined, including the need to act in a timely fashion and the need to ensure the change is led by those who understand the research basis of educational administration. Five characteristics of the environment in which new programs must operate are identified; they emphasize training while working, continuous learning, and the use of emerging technologies. For many reasons, the time is right for the creation of a new model, one that creates a new institution to prepare education leaders. Nine characteristics of this model are outlined, and it is further illustrated by an explanation of the Nebraska model, called "The New School for Educational Leadership. (RR)

**********
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
**********

ED339106

# THE NEW SCHOOL FOR EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP

John Prasch

**OCTOBER 15, 1991**

**DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATION**
**UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA-LINCOLN**

Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the University Council for Educational Administration, Baltimore, MD, October 25-27, 1991.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

✓ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

John Prasch

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

EA 023 478

## INTRODUCTION

Preparation programs for school administrators have not escaped the strident calls for restructuring sweeping the land. In step with on-going economic and industrial reorganizations, the changes facing agriculture, the urgent prod to reform the educational system and the call for improved teacher training programs, traditional ways of preparing educational administrators are also under scrutiny.[1] The rationale must be taken one step forward by insisting that, given the critical importance of leadership to accomplish reforms in education coupled with the emergence of new definitions of leadership, increasing the competence of educational administrators is the highest priority.

Problems with progress in the current educational reform have several roots. In the first place, leadership of reform is essentially external to educational institutions, coming primarily from politicians and motivated by fears of economic decline. As a result, many reform initiatives have no solid basis in research and ignore much of what is known about successful change process. Secondly, educational institutions, particularly large universities, are immobilized by bureaucracy, much of it imposed by the multitude of federal, state, local and judicial restrictions imbedded in the governance structure of education, some of it stemming from the push and pull of interest groups with competing agendas and some from the complexities of decision making in large, loosely coupled democratic organizations. Many informed constituents despair of the ability of major universities to respond to rapidly changing environments.[2]

### Rationale

Members of the Department of Educational Administration at UNL are convinced of the following with regard to changing preparation programs for school administrators:

---

[1]See, for example, Improving the Preparation of School Administrators, report of the National Policy Board for Educational Administration, May 1989. Also Daniel Griffiths, et al., Leaders for American Schools, Berkeley, CA, 1988.

[2]Peter Drucker, "Entrepreneurship in the Service Sector" (Chapter 14), Innovation and Entrepreneurship, 1986.

1. Not only is the need for reform real, but also the time for action is now.

2. Traditional methods of change in universities, generally incremental and slow, are incapable of creating the bold, new and fundamentally restructured institution needed to prepare the next generation of educational leaders. Schools of education are not developing as professional units. They seek academic respectability and status by copying the criteria of other disciplines.

3. Unless there is timely change, preparation programs will be taken over by other institutions, some of which will be non-educational and/or commercial. For purposes of keeping practicing administrators abreast of new developments, professional organizations and private vendors already dominate.

4. Significant and desirable change is more likely to come from the vision and commitment of members of the organization who understand the research basis of educational administration and the context in which preparation programs are delivered than from externally imposed sources.

5. A knowledgeable corps of individuals need to be free to establish a truly different institution, one that is practical in the sense that it responds to the current realities while at the same time is forward looking to the changes ahead. The new institution must be free of the impediments to managing a professional graduate degree program while only a part of an undergraduate program whose mission is primarily teacher preparation.

6. The new program must make a fundamental response to the paradigm shifts in society and the availability of ever advancing technology.

A survey of the current scene established these characteristics of the environment in which new programs must operate.

1. There is little likelihood of return of preparation programs to an older and more leisurely time when prospective administrators took a year or more off for a program of study in residence. Stipends available for such study, never in large supply, have not kept pace with inflation or with salaries of teachers and administrators. Training while working is the norm in many vocations in our faster paced society. Witness the huge commitment to training and re-training in the business world and the ever expanding opportunities through conferences and workshops for continuous learning.

2. Many colleges and universities are in a weak position to respond to the need for improved programs. The weakness lies in the fragmentation resulting from the number of struggling programs, each lacking the critical mass of staff and resources needed to mount stronger new programs. Also, the current lack of funding and new demands for collaboration create a window of opportunity for combining forces from several campuses to build stronger institutions. In any event, none of the present programs is likely to grow in strength or be changed sufficiently to respond in an appropriate manner under current circumstances.

   Although training programs are numerous, the limited financial support for graduate programs for educational leaders is fragmented and inefficiently used under present structure. Given the inevitable competition for clients, attempts to improve quality by upgrading entrance selectivity and more rigorous requirements for performance are counter productive.

   Not only is the supply of clients limited but programs are also in competition for a finite number of potential faculty. Quality programs require services of highly specialized and nationally visible faculty. Not all campuses are able to attract such staff. The present array of programs does not serve either efficiently or economically. Important specialized course work, law and finance for example, is either replicated among adjacent institutions or provided in substandard quality.

3. There is a strong willingness on the part of policy makers and organizations who have a stake in improved programs to cooperate with and support radical change.

4. National and regional attention and support for a significant change is assured. Despite the volume of comments from the newly created National Policy Board, the University Council for Educational Administration and other agencies, no new definitive model has yet emerged. When a viable and truly new program is put in place, it will gain national attention and could become a model for other regions. In addition to UCEA, the American Association of School Administrators, the Mid Continent Regional Educational Laboratory and important national foundations are seeking leadership in the creating of new programs.

5. Emerging technologies and more sophisticated understanding of how adults best learn create a broad and relatively untapped base for organizing new instructional programs.

For these and other reasons, the time is right for the creation of a new model, one that does not simply patch up or rearrange existing programs already found wanting, but one that creates a new institution to prepare educational leaders. The new model must have the following characteristics:

1. The mission must be clearly focused on the development of educational leadership, primarily by preparing school administrators.

2. The institution must be statewide or regional, combining to the maximum extent possible all of a state's resources in a single comprehensive program.

3. The new institution must not be thought of as a building or a place. It must be seen as a program, much of which is available in multiple settings and delivered in a variety of ways.

4. The program must embrace the best of what is known about effective adult learning and must become the vehicle for the development of appropriate new technology with emphasis on distance learning.

5. Organizationally, the institution must be free to build its own program, completely separate and independent of the larger organizations that educational administration departments are a part of on existing campuses.

6. The institution must make greater use of practicing administrators and build stronger ties to existing schools throughout the region it serves.

7. The institution must build strong cooperative relationships with scholars in the generic disciplines of philosophy, sociology and psychology as well as with schools of business education, law, architecture and public administration. Building a critical mass of human resources is an indispensable ingredient.

8. The institution must also maintain cooperative relationships not only with its many stakeholders, but also with national organizations concerned about administrator preparation. Participation of and evaluation by these agencies is important to keep the institution accountable and on the cutting edge.

9. The new institution must have the strong and enthusiastic backing of existing administrators as well as legislative leadership to clear the hurdles that might be in the way of the creation of a legally viable entity.

## The Nebraska Model

### The New School for Educational Leadership

1. This model depends on the establishment of a completely new and independent professional school, intended to have the strength and stature and some of the characteristics of the schools of law, medicine, architecture and journalism. The new school compares with other professional schools in its predominant focus on preparing professionals in a specified field of work. Nevertheless, the new school differs remarkably from existing professional schools because it is a collection of resources and a program, rather than a place and its methods of instruction will necessarily deviate substantially from the traditional. These differences respond to the unique opportunities afforded by the fact that most school leaders prepare for leadership positions while already holding positions in a wide variety of educational institutions throughout the region.

2. The governance structure of the new school can parallel that of other Colleges in the sense that there is a Dean. In order to preserve the state wide nature of the institution, however, the Dean may eventually report to the President rather than one of the Chancellors.

3. Faculty members of departments of educational administration of all participating institutions (UNL, UNO and UNK initially, but including other state schools as they wish) will become the faculty of the New School for Educational Leadership. Faculty members will remain attached to their home institutions, initially, and will have their tenure and other benefit rights protected. However, the dean will have the responsibility to make teaching assignments and schedules. Although faculty will remain at their home base, they may be assigned field duty or teaching at other sites. Meetings alternately on the various campuses, frequent teleconferences and/or computer bulletins will be necessary to insure all faculty opportunity for full scale participation in program decisions.

4. Program will be planned jointly with participation of all faculty members under the leadership of the dean. There will be a single core program supplemented with opportunities for specialization. The core program will deal with the generic substance of effective administration, with emphasis on the human relations skills of working with others so important to success as, for example, defined in assessment center research. The main thrust of the program will be to prepare highly skilled professional certified administrators to serve at all levels and all capacities of educational leadership.

5. Delivery of the program will not be limited to the standard format of unrelated combinations of three-hour courses. Instead, it will be a comprehensive but sequential selection of learning experiences including traditional courses, workshops, seminars, symposiums, field experiences, short courses and mentorships. Some of the experiences will depend upon applications of new technology involving simulations, use of videotapes, interactive video and other techniques applicable to distance learning.

6. The general intent will be to make the core program equally accessible across the state by having a portion of the program available locally, but with culminating and integrating group experiences at central sites. For example, a student in western Nebraska may get some of the basic work at Kearney but will also have other experiences in Lincoln or Omaha.

7. Initial funding of the New School will be on the basis of a pro-rata contribution from each of the participating campuses. Eventually, and dependent upon final upper level governance arrangements, the New School will be provided a separate budget. Tuition for all students will be at the same rate.

8. Integration of the program will be achieved through uniform entrance requirements of all participants, use of common assessment center methodology to assess strengths and weaknesses of clients, development of performance files by all students and common exit requirements.

9. Continuous and meaningful interaction with the field will be assured in the following ways:

    a. Use of skilled practitioners as part of the delivery system.

    b. Use of local educational institutions as temporary sites and/or laboratories.

    c. Aggressive programs of in-service activities. Certification and graduation will not be perceived as a dividing point between preparation and practice. Rather, practice will be considered as part of a continuous learning process supported from the New School. In this context, practitioners will also see themselves as continuously a part of the New School.

    d. Active linkages with state and national organizations such as UCEA, AASA, NASSP, NAEP, NSBA, NCSA, NASB, ESUs, ETV, etc.

e. Mechanisms to foster the above concepts include conferences on current issues, collection and dissemination of important data on pertinent research and topical workshops. Emphasis on electronic information exchange and development of a useful data base will help build a viable network among all involved.

10. The New School will broker a maximum of all available human resources by using practitioners, able retirees, experts from other disciplines and graduate students.

11. Although its primary function is to prepare effective administrators, the New School for Educational Leadership will not neglect research and service. The research agenda will be more focused by concentrating on finding answers to current administrative problems. Service will emphasize translating results of research into practice, continuous response to the need for surveys and studies of individual school districts, and policy advice to legislators and other policy actors. The statewide combination of faculty, practitioners, senior fellows and graduate students puts the New School in a stronger position to provide these services than are any of the existing departments.